

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 4-9 and 19-20 have been amended; claims 1-3, 10 and 14-18 have been canceled; claims 21-34 have been added and claims 11-13 remain unchanged. Thus, claims 4-9, 11-13 and 19-34 are pending.

Claims 4-9, 11-13, 19 and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Takano et al. (US 6,434,580) in view of Serbinis et al. (US 6,584,466).

As amended, all the pending claims of the subject application comply with all requirements of 35 U.S.C. Accordingly, Applicant requests examination and allowance of all pending claims.

Formal Matters

Applicants thank the Examiner for withdrawing the finality of the previous Office Action.

Applicants have submitted an IDS concurrent with the present amendment. Consideration of the references cited in the IDS is respectfully requested.

New Figs. 6-9 and New Text added to Specification

Newly added Figs. 6-9 represent material that was included in U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/333,962 entitled "Data Access Control Techniques Using Roles and Permissions" having Stephen Beyer, Jeffery Grainger and Cecily Snyder as inventors. For example, Figs. 3 and 4 from the '962 application represent new figures 6 and 7, and Figs. 9 and 10 from the '962 application represent new figures 8 and 9. The '962 application was incorporated by reference into the present application (see Specification, page 18, paragraph [54]), accordingly, no new matter is believed to be added by the inclusion of these figures.

Similarly, the new material added to the Specification including paragraphs 23A-23D, 49A-49C, 50A-50F and 54A-54J was also set forth in the '962 application. See e.g., pages 14-21 of the '962 application. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert no new material is introduced via such amendments.

The Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

Claims 4-9, 11-13, 19 and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Takano et al. (US 6,434,580) in view of Serbinis et al. (US 6,584,466). This Rejection is respectfully traversed.

Takano et al. is directed to a system for preparing patent applications for a single entity or company. The system in Takano allows for inventors of the single company to create invention disclosures and forward the disclosures to an appropriate patent attorney for preparation of a patent application. See e.g., col. 5, line 52 to col. 6, line 15. The inventor and attorney interact with a common server computer over a network connection such as the Internet. Col. 5, lines 49-51. There is no disclosure or suggestion within Takano et al. that the system can be used to create invention disclosures and patent applications and track other related electronic documents associated with the same for multiple, unrelated companies or technology developers. Nor, as acknowledged by the Examiner, is there disclosure in Takano, of maintaining and enforcing access rights among multiple law firms to patent application data stored in a common repository.

In contrast, claim 19 pertains to a method of managing electronic documents and data for a plurality of patent applications that are owned by (e.g., assigned to) multiple, unrelated companies and are prosecuted by multiple, unrelated law firms. Applicants have amended claim 19 in order to specify how the method maintains and enforces rights to access the electronic documents and data. Accordingly, as amended claim 19 recites:

"for a plurality of different and unrelated technology developers, allowing users from each such technology developer to create a plurality of invention disclosures for each respective technology developer;

...

wherein each user from the plurality of different and unrelated technology developers and each user from the plurality of patent law firms is assigned to at least one group that can be used in determining whether a user may access electronic documents and data in a particular collection of electronic documents and wherein each user is assigned one or more roles that are associated with a set of permissions that can be used in determining if a user can perform a particular operation on a particular electronic document in a collection; and

wherein when a user generates a request to perform an operation on an electronic document in a particular collection of electronic documents, in response to receiving the request, determining (i) a first group to which the user is assigned; (ii) a second group to which the electronic document is assigned; (iii) one or more roles to which the user is assigned. (iv) unit level access information for the first the particular collection of electronic documents and (v) if the user can perform the operation on the electronic document based upon the first group to which the user is assigned, the second group to which the electronic document is assigned, the set of permissions associated with the one or more roles to which the

user is assigned and the unit level access information for the particular collection of electronic documents;

Among other elements, Takano et al. does not teach or suggest the particular method of maintaining and enforcing rights to access electronic documents and data as recited in claim 19. For example, there is no disclosure in Takano et al of combining three different data (group level access information, user roles and unit level access information) in making a determination as to whether or not a particular user can perform a particular operation. Furthermore, Applicants respectfully assert the secondary reference, Serbinis et al., does not make up for this deficiency in the primary reference. For example, there is no disclosure in Serbinis et al. of using both group level and unit level access information in making a determination as to whether or not a particular user can perform a particular operation. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 19, and its dependents, are patentable over the combination of Takano et al. and Serbinis et al. Independent claim 20 also recites that three different levels of data (group level access information, user roles and unit level access information) in making a determination as to whether or not a particular user can perform a particular operation and is thus believed to be allowable over the cited references for similar reasons as discussed above with respect to claim 19. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the Section 103 rejection and allowance of all these claims.

New Claims

New claims 21-34 have been added to secure an appropriate scope of protection for Applicants.

Applicants respectfully assert the new claims are all allowable over the art of record. thank the Examiner for withdrawing the objections oath/declaration and for withdrawing the rejection under 35 U.S.C. Section 112.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 650-326-2400.

Respectfully submitted,



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